

AGENCY INFORMATION

Agency Name: Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy

Address of Agency:

a. Main Office:

1910 Byrd Avenue, Suite 5
Richmond, Virginia 23230

b. Satellite Office(s) (if applicable):

287 Independence Boulevard, Suite 120
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23462

c. Contract Office(s) (if applicable):

Not Applicable

Agency Telephone Number: (804) 225-2042

Agency Toll-Free Telephone Number: (800) 552-3962

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Agency Toll-Free TTY Number: (800) 552-3962

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Agency E-Mail Address: general.vopa@vopa.virginia.gov

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Staff Preparing Report Office Location: Richmond, Virginia

PART I: NON-CASE SERVICES

A. INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES (I&R)

1. Total Number of Individuals Receiving I&R Services during the Fiscal Year	296
2. Total Number of Requests for I&R Services during the Fiscal Year	*

* Over the past year, VOPA began the process of assessing all federal grant requirements for reporting information and referral requests. Some grants require just reporting the number of individuals requesting, some require the number of issues presented, and similar to PAAT, some require specific categories. VOPA has discovered that just as the reporting requirements differ, so have the staff practices, some have reported numbers of individuals, some have reported issues and some have reported both. We have developed a reporting instrument that will reflect all the requirements and it was implemented October 1, 2004.

B. TRAINING ACTIVITIES

1. Number of Training Sessions Presented by Staff	14
2. Number of Individuals Who Attended These Training Sessions	351

- 3. Describe two training events presented by the staff. Include the following information:**
(a) topics covered, (b) the purpose of the training, and (c) a description of the attendees.

Training Event #1

- Different types of home modifications for the elderly.
- To inform elderly clients on the types of assistive technology available to them and how the devices can assist them with their daily living within their homes.
- DRS, occupational therapists and other agencies that work with the elderly population.

Training Event #2

- What is AT and the different types of loans available and other ways to purchase assistive technology.
- To educate the CIL's clients on AT and ways to purchase different types of assistive technology.
- Consumers

4. Agency Outreach -- Describe the agency's outreach efforts to previously unserved or underserved individuals including minority communities.

VOPA has partnered with the Governor's Latino Advisory Commission Liaison to develop a planful, strategic outreach effort for Virginians with disabilities who speak Spanish. VOPA is developing and nurturing a representative committee that reflects the disability and Spanish speaking communities to help in this area. We have invited representatives from the VOPA Advisory Councils to join us. In addition, our Resource Advocacy Unit, which handles all requests for services has practiced with the telephone "Language Line." This is to ensure that if we get calls from minority callers that they can be handled efficiently. We are also working on having publications translated into Spanish.

VOPA has convened a committee of staff members to assist in the reviewing, revising and updating of the VOPA publications. The committee has agreed to some general guidelines, the most important being that the publications reflect one voice and one vision for VOPA.

VOPA is sensitive to the need to explore more and better means of conducting outreach for minorities in all areas of our programs. VOPA is comparing the demographics of Virginia with those of clients served to identify trends and pockets of underserved Virginians. This was a new activity for VOPA and there were learning steps to be taken. The VOPA client database was going to play an integral component in identifying an underserved population. However, VOPA discovered that the database had significant integrity issues. VOPA staff have spent a significant

amount of time and effort to develop and implement database enhancements that will help in the identification of underserved populations.

In mid-February, VOPA began to utilize the client database to collect data on the information and referral calls coming into the Resource Advocacy Unit (provides information/referral, technical assistance, develops screenings). Previously, this information was collected on paper and hand counted. We are hoping to use this data collection to assist with the federal reporting activities as well as in the priority setting process. October 1, 2004, an electronic form was implemented for all VOPA staff to collect and report this data to help with compiling and analyzing for pockets of unserved/underserved and trends in service requests.

Please see the chart below for a comparison of the Virginia population and the VOPA clients served in FY04.

Ethnicity	Virginia	VOPA Caseload
White	72.3%	66.7%
African American	19.6%	26.8%
American Indian/Alaska Natives	0.3%	<1%
Asian	3.7%	<1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	.1%	0
Latino/Hispanic	4.0%	1.3%
Other	4.7%	1.1%
Unknown		3.3%

(Stats are based on 2000 US Census and VOPA FY04 client caseload.)

VOPA maintains a website that posts all of our federal grants' goals and objectives. This website also has the notices for the Board of Directors' and VOPA's Advisory Councils meetings. Job vacancies, announcements, VOPA publications, quarterly newsletters, and disability-related links are also available. The annual public comment process is posted on the website and visitors can participate on-line.

C. INFORMATION DISSEMINATED TO THE PUBLIC BY YOUR AGENCY

For each method of dissemination, enter the total number of each method used by your agency during the reporting period to distribute information to the public. For publications/booklets/brochures (item 5), enter the total number of documents produced. See instruction manual for details.

Method of dissemination	Number
1. Radio and TV Appearances by Agency Staff	1
2. Newspaper/Magazine/Journal Articles Prepared by Agency Staff	
3. PSAs/Videos Aired by the Agency	1
4. Website Hits	15178
5. Publications/Booklets/Brochures Disseminated by the Agency	512
5a. Number of individuals/agencies receiving documents produced in item 5	10
6. Other (specify)	

D. INFORMATION DISSEMINATED ABOUT YOUR AGENCY BY EXTERNAL MEDIA COVERAGE

Describe information about your agency produced and disseminated by external media or other agencies/entities for each of the relevant categories below. Enter "N/A" for each field not applicable for your agency.

1. Radio/TV coverage

VOPA staff were interviewed on "Virginia Voice," a non-profit radio reading service. Staff provided information about VOPA in general and discussed assistive technology devices and services; that is, what are they, how to access them and funding options.

2. Newspapers/Magazines/Journals-N/A specific to AT however, VOPA was in the news over fifteen (15) times in FY04.

3. PSAs/Videos

VOPA produced a Public Service Announcement (with a State university's assistance) that ran on local television stations regarding Assistive Technology. The PSA was posted on the VOPA website. VOPA made CD-ROM copies of the PSA for a targeted distribution

4. Publications/Booklets/Brochures-

In keeping with the VOPA focus on Southwest Virginia for this year; a mailing list of 99 healthcare providers was developed to receive information about VOPA as well as AT devices and services' availability through insurance and Medicaid. The mailing list was developed using a large healthcare insurer's provider listing for that area.

PART II: CASE-SERVICES

A. INDIVIDUALS SERVED

Individuals	Number
1. Individuals Served Receiving Advocacy at Start of Fiscal Year (carryover from prior)	7
2. Additional Individuals Served During Fiscal Year (new for fiscal year)	26
3. Total Number of Individuals Served During Fiscal Year (1 +2)	33
4a. Total Number of Cases Closed During the Fiscal Year	12
4b. Total Number of Individuals with All Their Cases Closed During the Fiscal Year	12
5. Total Individuals Still Being Served at the End of the Fiscal Year (3 minus 4b)	21

B. PROBLEM AREAS/COMPLAINTS

Complaint Area	Number of cases
1. Architectural Accessibility	0
2. Education	23
3. Employment Discrimination	1
4. SSI/SSDI Work Incentives	0
5. Healthcare (<i>total generated by the system from a-d below</i>)	6
a. Medicaid	5
b. Medicare	0

c. Private Medical Insurance	0
d. Other	1
6. Housing	0
7. Post-Secondary Education	2
8. Rehabilitation Services	5
9. Transportation	3
10. Voting <i>(total generated by the system from a-c below)</i>	0
a. Accessible Polling Place / Equipment	0
b. Registration	0
c. Other	0
11. Other – special timekeeping device	1
12. Other – personal safety	1
13. TOTAL	42

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEVICES/SERVICES

1. Number of individuals that received one or more AT devices or services as a result of casework (unduplicated count)	12
2. Type of AT device or AT service received as a result of casework	Number of devices/services
a. Devices for communication	3
b. Devices for mobility	
c. Devices for hearing or seeing	1
d. Devices for reading or writing	2
e. Devices to assist with household activities	
f. Devices to assist with participation in play or recreation	
g. Devices to assist with personal care	
h. Devices to aid in therapy or medical treatment	
i. Devices to assist with the use of public/private transportation	1
j. Devices to assist with employment	
k. Devices to aid with school/learning	4
l. AT services	4
m. Other - specify	
n. Total number of devices and services received as a result of casework (a-l)	15

D. PRIMARY REASON FOR CLOSING A CASE FILE

Primary Reason	Number of cases
1. All Issues Resolved in Client's Favor	5
2. Some Issues Resolved in Client's Favor	
3. Other Representation Obtained	
4. Individual Withdrew Complaint	4
5. Services Not Needed Due to Death, Relocation, etc.	
6. Individual Not Responsive to Agency	2
7. Case Lacked Legal Merit	1
8. Conflict of Interest	
9. Lack of Resources	
10. Not Within Priorities	
11. Issue Not Resolved in Client's Favor	
12. Other - specify	
13. Total (number must match Part II A4a)	12

E. INTERVENTION STRATEGIES FOR CLOSED CASES

Interventions	Number of cases
1. Short Term Assistance	4
2. Systemic/Policy Activities	
3. Investigation/Monitoring	
4. Negotiation	2
5. Mediation/Alternative Dispute Resolution	4
6. Administrative Hearing	
7. Legal Remedy/Litigation	
8. Class Action Suits	
(No response from client)	2
9. Total (<i>this should match the total in Part II.A.4.a above</i>)	12

PART III: STATISTICAL INFORMATION FOR INDIVIDUALS SERVED

A. AGE OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED

Age	Number of individuals
0 to 4	1
5 to 13	16
14 to 18	5
19 to 21	
22 to 40	4
41 to 64	7
65 and over	
Age Unknown	
Total (this should match the total in II.A.3)	33

B. GENDER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED

Gender	Number of individuals
Male	24
Female	9
Total (this should match the total in II.A.3)	33

C. RACE AND ETHNICITY OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED

1. Race of individuals served.

Race	Number of individuals
a. American Indian or Alaska Native	
b. Asian	
c. Black or African American	10
d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	
e. White	22
f. More than one race	
g. Unknown/not reported	1
h. Total (this should match the total in II.A.3)	33

2. Ethnicity of individuals served.

Ethnicity	Number of individuals
a. Hispanic/Latino	1
b. Non- Hispanic/Latino	32
c. Ethnicity unknown/not reported	
d. Total (<i>this should match the total in II.A.3</i>)	33

D. LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED

Living Arrangement	Number of individuals
1. Community Residential Home	
2. Foster Care	
3. Homeless/Shelter	
4. Legal Detention/Jail/Prison	
5. Nursing Facility	
6. Parental/Guardian or Other Family Home	23
7. Independent	4
8. Private Institutional Setting	
9. Public (State Operated) Institutional Setting	6
10. Public Housing	
11. VA Hospital	
12. Other – describe the living arrangement	
13. Other – describe the living arrangement	
14. Unknown/Not Provided	
15. Total (<i>this should match the total in II.A.3</i>)	33

E. PRIMARY DISABILITY OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED

Primary Disabling Condition	Number of individuals
1. ADD/ADHD	
2. AIDS/HIV Positive	
3. Absence of Extremities	
4. Auto-immune (non-AIDS/HIV)	
5. Autism	4
6. Blindness (Both Eyes)	2
7. Other Visual Impairments (Not Blind)	
8. Cancer	1
9. Cerebral Palsy	4
10. Deafness	2

11. Hard of Hearing/ Hearing Impaired (Not Deaf)	
12. Deaf-Blind	
13. Diabetes	
14. Digestive Disorders	
15. Epilepsy	
16. Genitourinary Conditions	
17. Heart & Other Circulatory Conditions	
18. Mental Illness	5
19. Mental Retardation	8
20. Multiple Sclerosis	
21. Muscular Dystrophy	
22. Muscular/Skeletal Impairment	1
23. Orthopedic Impairments	
24. Neurological Disorders/Impairment	2
25. Respiratory Disorders/Impairment	
26. Skin Conditions	
27. Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)	3
28. Speech Impairments	1
29. Spina bifida	
30. Substance Abuse (Alcohol or Drugs)	
31. Tourette Syndrome	
32. Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	
33. Other Disability - specify	
34. Total (this should match the total in II.A.3)	33

F. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED

Geographic Location	Number of individuals
1. Urban/Suburban (50k population)	19
2. Rural (<50k population)	14
3. Other - specify	
4. Unknown	
5. Total (this should match the total in II.A.3)	33

PART IV: SYSTEMIC ACTIVITIES AND LITIGATION

A. NON-LITIGATION SYSTEMIC ACTIVITIES

1. Number of Policies/Practices Changed as a Result of Non-Litigation Systemic Activities	unknown
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2. Describe the agency's systemic activity completed during the fiscal year.

Include information about (a) the policy or practice that was changed, as a result of your agency's non-litigation systemic activity, along with a description of the negative impact upon individuals with disabilities, and (b) the manner in which this change benefited individuals with disabilities. If possible, (c) estimate the number of individuals potentially affected by the policy/practice change and (d) the method used to determine this estimate. [If you cannot provide an estimate, enter 'N/A'.] Include (e) one case example of the agency's systemic activity related to this policy/practice change.

a. VOPA made a strong effort this past fiscal year in providing training across the state for diverse audiences on assistive technology (AT), assistive technology services, AT funding sources, and disability rights related to AT.

b. We would hope that this effort has resulted in an increased awareness of AT and related disability rights.

c. N/A

d. N/A

e. VOPA provided over 15 trainings this past fiscal year. This is quite an accomplishment as we had limited readily available materials for training initially. A PSA was developed and ran on a local television station. In addition, one of our staff was interviewed on Virginia Voice, a radio station devoted to people who are blind, visually impaired or have reading difficulties. This same staff provided training at each of 5 regional consortiums in the rural southwestern part of Virginia to ensure the entire state had information related to AT and disability rights.

3. Number of On-going Non-Litigation Systemic Activities	0
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4. Describe the agency's on-going systemic activities.

Not applicable

B. LITIGATION/CLASS ACTIONS

Report information on the PAAT-related litigation for your agency.

	Number
1. Total Number of Non-Class Action Lawsuits, resulting in, or with the potential for, systemic change, pending during the fiscal year	0
a. Number of Non-Class Action Lawsuits Newly Filed During Fiscal Year	0
b. Number of Non-Class Action Lawsuits That were Pending at Start of Fiscal Year (carryover from prior fiscal year)	0
c. Number of Non-Class Action Lawsuits Closed During Fiscal Year	0

2. Describe the agency's on-going systemic non-class action litigation activities.

Not applicable

3. Describe the agency's completed systemic non-class action litigation activities.

Not applicable

Report information on the PAAT-related class action lawsuits for your agency.

4. Total Number of Class Action Lawsuits Filed and/or Pending (during fiscal year)	0
a. Number of Class Action Lawsuits Newly Filed During Fiscal Year	0
b. Number of Class Action Lawsuits Pending at Start of Fiscal Year (carryover from prior fiscal year)	0
c. Number of Class Action Lawsuits Closed During Fiscal Year.	0

5. Describe the agency's on-going systemic class action litigation activities.

Not applicable

6. Describe the agency's completed systemic class action activities.

Not applicable

C. LITIGATION-RELATED MONITORING

Did the agency conduct any litigation-related monitoring under the PAAT program during the fiscal year?

No

PART V: PRIORITIES

It should be noted that the Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy (VOPA) has made a deliberate decision to take cases that we believe will have a strong systemic impact on the lives of Virginians with disabilities. Although we are opening a targeted number of cases, we believe that by tying them directly to systemic reform, we are making significant impact on a much larger population group.

It should also be noted that VOPA plans its programs based on the needs within the state; not by funding stream or specific disabilities. Some of the identified estimated cases may be addressed in conjunction with other funding streams, but the result will still be a positive impact on PAAT eligible individuals.

A. PRIORITIES

For each of your PAAT program priorities for the fiscal year covered by this report, please provide the information below. You may enter data on as many priorities as you need. See the instruction manual for more details.

1. Describe the Priority

Goal: Children and Youth With Disabilities Receive an Appropriate Education

Focus Area: Assistive Technology and Supports in Public Education

Objectives: 1. Provide legal representation to seven (7) children who have been denied appropriate assistive technology devices and services as a part of their IEP or Section 504 Plan.

2. Inform community of the availability of assistive technology, through development and distribution of Public Service Announcements.

2. Describe the Need, Issue, or Barrier Addressed

Denial of or inappropriate transition services

This is a priority because VOPA determined that persons with disabilities rights to access to appropriate transition services were being violated. In addition, this was identified through a public comment process, with guidance by the Governing Board and with input from the VOPA Advisory Councils. The desired effect of addressing this priority is that more persons with disabilities will be able to appropriately access transition services

3. Indicate the Outcome of the priority: Met

4. Total Number of Cases Handled Related to the Priority: 20

5. Illustrative Cases/Activities (at least one specific case/activity description showing the success)

VOPA represented a child with quadraplegia whose school refused to provide driver's education and refused to provide an accessible vehicle for him to take the in-vehicle training. VOPA negotiated with the school, without success. A Due Process petition was filed, evidence was submitted and witnesses were subpoenaed. On the eve of trial, the school district agreed to give the child up to \$7500 to attend a complete a driver training course.

VOPA represented a child who needed a one-to-one aide in order to help him use his assistive technology. The school originally refused to do so, arguing that the aid was not an appropriate "assistive technology service." VOPA retained an expert to evaluate the case and was preparing a Due Process petition when the school entered into a settlement and agreed to provide the aide.

1. Describe the Priority

Goal: People with disabilities have Equal Access to Government Services

Focus Area: Polling Places for People with Disabilities

- Objectives:
1. Investigate whether polling places in five (5) cities or counties in the Northern area of Virginia are accessible to persons with disabilities. If not, initiate litigation and/or other advocacy to improve access.
 2. Obtain and review the State's plan on voting access and provide comment if appropriate.

2. Describe the Need, Issue, or Barrier Addressed

This allows VOPA to enforce Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act on a systemic basis

3. Indicate the Outcome of the priority: Met-but not with PAAT funding. This objective was erroneously reported as a PAAT objective.

4. Total Number of Cases Handled Related to the Priority: not limited to individual cases

5. Illustrative Cases/Activities (at least one specific case/activity description showing the success)

VOPA has greatly expanded the reach of this objective. VOPA is now advocating for accessible voting statewide. VOPA provided training for employees from the state board of elections and department of rehabilitative services on accessibility requirements for voting sites. VOPA also developed an interactive Voting Accessibility Survey tool. The tool is on a CD-ROM and includes all requirements for accessibility at voting sites. It can be used by any person or entity conducting a survey of a voting site.

VOPA staff provided a well-received presentation to the VOPA Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with mental illness and the Disabilities Advisory Councils on the Help America Vote Act and VOPA's work in this area. One Council member, who lives in a retirement community, took the hand-out materials back to her housing complex and questioned the management about disabled residents being able to get to the polling places. At the last Council meeting she reported that on Election Day she saw vans with people with disabilities being taken to the polling places.

In the summer of 2003 The Virginia Board of Elections implemented the Virginia State Plan under the Help America Vote Act based on input from the community, as well as the Virginia HAVA Advisory Committee, the Governor's Office, and members of the General Assembly. One of VOPA's first actions was to review the State Plan on Voting Access, and make arrangements to work with the State Board of Elections to monitor their steps taken to implement HAVA. VOPA had several discussions with the State Board of Elections on providing access for people with sensory disabilities. Additionally, VOPA sent two letters to the State Board of Elections, advising that we have concerns about access to absentee ballots for people with cognitive disabilities; we also noted that we have planned a poll monitoring project for FY05.

1. Describe the Priority

Goal: People with Disabilities Live in the Most Integrated Environment Possible

Focus Area: Appropriate Assessment and use of Assistive Technology in State-Run Institutions

Objective: 1. Represent and advocate for three (3) residents of state-run institutions to obtain appropriate assessment for and use of assistive technology.

2. Describe the Need, Issue, or Barrier Addressed

This allows VOPA to address residents' needs for assistive technology assessments and devices/services.

3. Indicate the Outcome of the priority: Met

4. Total Number of Cases Handled Related to the Priority: 6

5. Illustrative Cases/Activities (at least one specific case/activity description showing the success)

VOPA represented a client who suffered a right clavicle fracture while in a state mental health institution, apparently due to a fall. In assessing the circumstances, it became apparent that the placement was not appropriate to his needs. He was using a standard wheelchair but could ambulate only for limited distances. VOPA arranged his transfer to a state mental retardation institution (an ICF/MR) where a complete physical evaluation, including occupational and physical therapy and assistive technology needs was conducted. Subsequently, the client was determined to be able to walk once his medication regimen was adjusted and his muscles strengthened. He transitioned from wheelchair to walker-with-wheelchair over distance, to a walker, to ambulating independently. Due to his increased strength and mobility and his satisfaction with his improved lifestyle, he was able to move from partial day in sheltered employment to a full day, to his current work, where he is working part time in the sheltered setting and several afternoons in satellite supported settings.

VOPA represented a client who was long term resident of state mental health institution. With a triple amputee, he retains use of only one arm. He was utilizing an old chair with one arm drive. However, the chair was clearly worn and no longer sturdy enough for his use. He had been recently approved for a community placement but could not move until the chair was repaired and could be safely used in his new residence and the community. With VOPA's assistance, he was assessed and fitted for a new, heavy duty chair, one arm drive, custom fitted. VOPA was also able to arrange to have the existing chair refurbished and repaired to serve in the interim so that the discharge and community placement went forward without delay. Once the new chair arrived, it was delivered to him in the community and fitted to him. Hospital staff followed up to ensure good fit and successful transition to the chair. He has adapted so well that his transfers are now much smoother and put less stress on his shoulder; he is no longer as inclined to pivot on his leg stump which reduces risk of damage to the skin. Based on his progress with this chair and successful integration into the community placement, a power chair is being sought to facilitate further independence and community integration.

1. Describe the Priority

Goal: People with Disabilities have Equal Access to Appropriate and Necessary Health Care

Focus Area: Assistive Technology Obtained through Medicaid and Other Insurances

- Objectives:
1. Distribute 100 copies of the VOPA publication, A Guide to Accessing Assistive Technology through Virginia's Medicaid Program, to speech therapists, physical therapists, and occupational therapists.
 2. Represent three (3) persons with disabilities who have been denied funding for Assistive Technology by Medicaid or other insurances.
 3. Provide, in partnership with State Disability Services Agencies, five (5) trainings on Acquiring Assistive Technology through Medicaid and other insurances.

2. Describe the Need, Issue, or Barrier Addressed

This allows VOPA to address the denial of assistive technology devices and services for people with disabilities by insurance entities.

3. Indicate the Outcome of the priority: Met

4. Total Number of Cases Handled Related to the Priority: 5

5. Illustrative Cases/Activities (at least one specific case/activity description showing the success)

VOPA currently represents one person who was denied assistive technology by Medicaid. The gentleman had his assistive technology approved, then had the approval withdrawn by the State Medicaid Agency. VOPA filed an administrative appeal with the State Medicaid Agency. The case was resolved on the eve of trial when the State Medicaid Agency agreed to approve the technology, which has been provided.

In a case outside of priorities, VOPA represented a woman who is blind and needed to use "411" service to find people's telephone numbers. Her local telephone company refused to provide this service for free. VOPA threatened litigation and secured a settlement agreement ensuring that she will be able to use "411" without charge.

1. Describe the Priority

Goal: People with Disabilities are Employed to their Maximum Potential

Focus Area: Acquisition of Assistive Technology for Persons with Disabilities by the Department of Rehabilitative Services, Department for the Blind and Vision and Impaired, and the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

- Objective:
1. Coordinate and provide five (5) trainings for persons with disabilities focusing on assistive technology, ways to access assistive technology, and funding for assistive technology.

2. Describe the Need, Issue, or Barrier Addressed

This provides people with disabilities a better understanding of the resources the vocational rehabilitation entities are required to assist participants with.

3. Indicate the Outcome of the priority: Met

4. Total Number of Cases Handled Related to the Priority: not limited to individual cases

5. Illustrative Cases/Activities (at least one specific case/activity description showing the success)

VOPA conducted fifteen trainings on the provision of Assistive Technology. VOPA produced a Public Service Announcement that ran on local television stations regarding Assistive Technology. VOPA also provided training on assistive technology at a regional disability conference.

1. Describe the Priority

Goal: People with Disabilities in the Commonwealth of Virginia are Aware of VOPA's Services

Focus Area: Underserved Communities

- Objectives:
1. By December 2003, identify one (1) additional target population to receive outreach and training.
 2. Create training materials and a presentation for the target population by March 31, 2004.
 3. Complete mailings and at least two (2) presentations to the target population by September 2004.

2. Describe the Need, Issue, or Barrier Addressed

Identify and address an underserved disability population.

3. Indicate the Outcome of the priority: Partially Met/Continuing

(a) Describe any external or internal implementation problems for outcomes marked "not met" or "partially met"

VOPA is comparing the demographics of Virginia with those of clients served to identify trends and pockets of underserved Virginians. This was a new activity for VOPA and there were learning steps to be taken. The VOPA client database was going to play an integral component in identifying an underserved population. However, VOPA discovered that the database had significant integrity issues. VOPA staff have spent a significant amount of time and effort to develop and implement database enhancements that will help in the identification of underserved populations.

In mid-February, VOPA began to utilize the client database to collect data on the information and referral calls coming into the Resource Advocacy Unit (provides information/referral, technical assistance, develops screenings). Previously, this information was collected on paper and hand counted. We are hoping to use this data collection to assist with the federal reporting activities as well as in the priority setting process. October 1, 2004, an electronic form was implemented for all VOPA staff to collect and report this data to help with compiling and analyzing for pockets of unserved/underserved and trends in service requests

4. Total Number of Cases Handled Related to the Priority: not limited to individual cases

5. Not applicable

1. Describe the Priority

Goal: People with Disabilities in the Commonwealth of Virginia are Aware of VOPA's Services

Focus Area: Spanish-Speaking Constituents

- Objectives:
1. Identify (5) Spanish community contacts in Virginia by December 2003.
 2. Develop two (2) VOPA primary publications in Spanish by June 2004.
 3. Complete two (2) presentations or training sessions between June 2004 and September 2004 for Spanish communities.

2. Describe the Need, Issue, or Barrier Addressed

VOPA will increase its visibility in the disability communities.

3. Indicate the Outcome of the priority: Partially Met/Continuing

(a) Describe any external or internal implementation problems for outcomes marked "not met" or "partially met."

VOPA has had significant contacts with the Governor's Latino Advisory Commission and its staff. Consultation with the staff resulted in the VOPA Executive Director being invited to present at the Commission's meeting. Several Commission members offered to provide contacts and linkages to the Latino community. In order to

develop a more planful, strategic outreach effort, VOPA has developed a representative committee that reflects the disability and Spanish speaking communities to help in this area. This committee plans to meet quarterly. VOPA has already implemented some of their recommendations.

4. **Total Number of Cases Handled Related to the Priority:** not limited to individual cases
5. **Illustrative Cases/Activities (at least one specific case/activity description showing the success)**
See #3 above

PRIORITIES for the CURRENT FISCAL YEAR

Report your program priorities for the current fiscal year (the fiscal year succeeding that covered by this report). You may enter data on as many priorities as you need. See the instruction manual for more details. The priorities you enter in this section will be pre-loaded into your annual performance report form for the coming fiscal year (section A above).

a. Describe the Priority

Goal: Children with Disabilities Receive an Appropriate Education

Focus Area: Assistive Technology and Supports in Schools

2. Describe the Need, Issue, or Barrier to be Addressed

Children with disabilities have a right to an appropriate education that includes access to assistive technology and other supports in school. VOPA will represent children with disabilities who have been denied assistive technology as part of their Individualized Education Plan or their Section 504 Plan. A Fact Sheet will be developed to assist with information and referral/technical assistance efforts. VOPA's efforts will help ensure that children have access to appropriate assistive technology and receive a free appropriate public education.

b. Describe the Priority

Goal: People with Disabilities Live in the Most Integrated Environment Possible

Focus Area: Appropriate Assessment and Use of Assistive Technology in Institutions

2. Describe the Need, Issue, or Barrier to be Addressed

Residents and staff of state institutions need a greater awareness of the availability and flexibility of assistive technology to enhance the functioning of individuals with disabilities.

c. Describe the Priority

Goal: People with Disabilities are Employed to Their Maximum Potential

Focus Area: Acquisition of Assistive Technology for Persons with Disabilities by the Department of Rehabilitative Services, Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, and the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

2. Describe the Need, Issue, or Barrier to be Addressed

Individuals with disabilities utilizing these vocational rehabilitation entities shall increase their awareness of the availability and how to access AT devices, services and assessments. VOPA's efforts will help ensure that people with disabilities are employed to their maximum potential, which will increase their ability to live independently and increase their standard of living.

d. Describe the Priority

Goal: People with Disabilities have Equal Access to Appropriate and Necessary Health Care

Focus Area: Assistive Technology Obtained through Medicaid and other Insurances

2. Describe the Need, Issue, or Barrier to be Addressed

An essential element of the rehabilitative process, life sustenance, and quality of life is to be able to access appropriate and necessary healthcare. For some individuals with disabilities, assistive technology is a key element of necessary healthcare. In particular, people who receive Medicaid Waiver services often need assistive technology to avoid institutionalization. VOPA's efforts, therefore, will help people live in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs.

e. Describe the Priority

Goal: People with Disabilities in the Commonwealth of Virginia are Aware of VOPA's Services
Focus Area: Underserved Communities

2. Describe the Need, Issue, or Barrier to be Addressed

VOPA will increase its visibility in the disability communities. During the public comment/input activities during FY04, we frequently heard that many in the disability community were not aware of VOPA nor its services.

f. Describe the Priority

Goal: People with Disabilities in the Commonwealth of Virginia are Aware of VOPA's Services
Focus Area: Spanish Speaking Constituents

2. Describe the Need, Issue, or Barrier to be Addressed

VOPA will increase its visibility in the disability communities. During the public comment/input activities during FY04, we frequently heard that many in the disability community were not aware of VOPA nor its services. The Spanish Speaking Community is growing in Virginia; our Spanish Speaking Outreach Committee members tell us that the census numbers for Virginia reflect under-reporting of this population.

C. AGENCY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Describe the most significant accomplishments of the agency during the fiscal year.

In February 2004, the Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy moved out of a State office building that housed other state agencies and the Governor's Office. This physical move from State government property sent a powerful message to the public that VOPA is an independent State agency and no longer a part of the Executive Branch of State government. The new site offers better accessibility for potential clients, clients and guests. The new site has also had a positive impact on VOPA staff, including staff that work off-site. In April 2004, the Staunton office was closed due to personnel turnover.

Prior to October 1, 2003, VOPA was structured by funding streams. Staff caseloads were assigned based on grants. Effective October 1, 2003, the Office was re-aligned to more closely reflect the needs of the VOPA constituencies. Three units resulted; Institutions, Communities, and the Resource Advocacy Unit. After some initial growing pains, these units have become cohesive, effective, and motivated advocates and systems change agents. Services are provided both within the unit structure and across organizational lines when needed. This re-alignment reflects the complexities of the VOPA constituencies' needs; that is, not all clients fit neatly into a single grant targeted population. This structure allows the host of client needs to be addressed by a single staff person using various funding streams, instead of having to change workers to address different presenting needs. The goals of the re-structuring included:

- Improve our ability to focus on results and outcomes
- Improve quality and timeliness of investigations
- Provide best possible client services
- Be able to respond to changing demands
- Promote staff satisfaction
- Minimize middle management
- Keep paperwork requirements manageable
- Have manageable supervision loads

It should be noted that the Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy (VOPA) has made a deliberate decision to take cases that we believe will have a strong systemic impact on the lives of Virginians with disabilities. Although we are opening a targeted number of cases, we believe that by tying them directly to systemic reform, we are making significant impact on a much larger population group.

It should also be noted that VOPA plans its programs based on the needs within the state; not by funding stream or specific disabilities. Some of the identified estimated cases may be addressed in conjunction with other funding streams, but the result will still be a positive impact on AT eligible individuals.

PART VI: AGENCY ADMINISTRATION

A. AGENCY FUNDING

Enter the sources of funds your agency received and used to carry out PAAT program activities. Round to the nearest dollar, do not include cents. Do not include in-kind contributions in the "Other" categories. Refer to instruction manual for types of funds to report in "Other."

PAAT funding sources	Amount Received
1. Federal P&A (AT Act funds):	\$ 94,818
2. Program income	\$
3. Other -specify	\$
4. Other – specify	\$
5. Other- specify	\$
6. Total:	\$ 94,818

B. DESCRIPTION OF PAAT PROGRAM STAFF

b. Provide a brief description of the agency's staffing plan for carrying out PAAT activities.

The VOPA Receptionist and Resource Advocates may provide information and referral and some technical assistance services for anyone requesting services from VOPA.

VOPA Disability Rights Advocates and Staff Attorneys provide case level services and pursue systemic reforms. They also provide training and outreach.

The Managing Attorney provides supervision and leadership in these efforts. He may also provide some case level services and pursue systemic reforms.

Support services (data management, fiscal, human resources, purchasing, etc.) are provided by administrative staff.

The Business Manager provides supervision and leadership for all of the administrative staff efforts.

The Policy Director provides leadership and direction in the areas of program/policy planning/development/monitoring/evaluation and collaboration with external entities.

The Executive Director provides the ultimate leadership and direction for all actions of the agency and provides supervision for the Managing Attorney, the Business Manager and the Policy Director.

c. PAAT Staff

Report on the number of persons and the number of full time equivalent (FTE) staff performing PAAT activities. As applicable, include (a) staff supported in full or in part by PAAT grant funds during the current reporting year, (b) subcontractor staff supported by PAAT funds and (c) P&A management staff to the extent that their duties included oversight of the PAAT program (and salaries were paid out of PAAT funds). Do not include P&A staff who did not work on PAAT cases during the fiscal year. Report actual, not budgeted, FTE totals. See the instruction manual for an example and further details on the type of staff to include in each position.

Type of Position	Number of persons	Number of FTEs
Professional		
Full-time	12	1.12
Part-Time		
Administrative		
Full-time	8	0.33
Part-time		
Totals	20	1.45

C. CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT

1. Briefly describe any consumer-responsive activities not reported elsewhere in this report (e.g., PAAT Advisory Board, forums to obtain input into planning and priorities). If 'not applicable,' enter 'N/A.'

VOPA has two Advisory Councils known as the Disabilities Advisory Council (DAC) and The Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illnesses (PAIMI) Council. The Councils' primary responsibility is to advise the protection and advocacy system on policies and priorities to be carried out in protecting individuals with disabilities. Both Councils have consumer representation. There are also consumer representatives from these Advisory Councils on the Spanish Speaking Outreach Committee.

VOPA developed and implemented strategies for gathering public comment on the goals and focus areas as well as the work of VOPA in general. A web-based survey was posted on the VOPA website and announced to the public via several list-serves. In addition, two focus groups were conducted (one in Roanoke and one in Northern Virginia) with invitees that represented varying disability rights interests; an emphasis was on inviting consumers and/or advocates. The VOPA Advisory Councils also participated in focus group activities with VOPA staff and provided input on the goals and focus areas as well as suggestions for the process of public comment gathering.

VOPA uses the terms "Goal" and "Focus Area" instead of "Priority." This is a result of client and potential client feedback that telling someone their issue does not fall within our priorities gives the person the impression we are insensitive to their issue. This change was positively received by our Governing Board and our Advisory Councils.

2. Consumer Involvement in P&A Agency Staff and Board

Person with a disability	Number
Agency staff	4
Agency board	3
Family members of a person with a disability	
Agency staff	VOPA does not collect this type of data from employees
Agency board	7
Total number of persons on agency staff	3
Total number of persons on agency board	10

D. GRIEVANCES FILED

Number of PAAT grievances filed against the agency during the fiscal year	0
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E. COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

1. Collaboration with Other P&A Programs and Activities

Briefly describe your work on AT issues funded by other P&A programs (do not include activities carried out with PAAT funds).

VOPA collaborates and consults with the National Association of Protection and Advocacy systems (NAPAS) and several VOPA staff subscribe to NAPAS supported P&A listservs. These listservs offer P&As the opportunity to consult and collaborate nationwide on similar issues and concerns facing people with disabilities.

Internally, VOPA staff working under the PAAT grant may also work under the PADD, CAP, HAVA or PAIR grants which all could be related to assistive technology device and service needs. For example, while working a PADD case that involves developing an appropriate IEP, the need for appropriate assistive technology assessment, devices, and services may be identified. If the PADD case is being worked by a VOPA staff not involved with PAAT, the PADD staff routinely will consult with the PATT staff or even have them join the case.

2. All Other Collaboration

Describe any coordination with programs that are not part of the agency (e.g. state Tech Act projects, state long-term care programs, etc.).

VOPA staff routinely collaborate with the vocational rehabilitation agencies in the area of assistive technology. These agencies include: the Department of Rehabilitative Services, the Department of the Blind and Vision Impaired and the Department of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. In addition, VOPA staff are available to staff of the state institutions for consultation about assistive technology needs and services.

VOPA provides "Office Hours" at some of the local Centers for Independent Living. Individuals with disabilities are informed of their AT rights and provided with other legal advice and services when appropriate. VOPA maintains a website that posts all of our federal grants' priorities, goals, and objectives, including CAP. This website also has the notices for the Board of Directors' and VOPA's Advisory Councils meetings. Job vacancies, announcements, VOPA publications, quarterly newsletters, and disability-related links are also available. The annual public comment process is posted on the website and visitors can participate on-line.